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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 006093

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SUBJECT: CCS SHIOZAKI PLEASED WITH ABE VISITS TO CHINA, ROK

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, reasons 1.5 (b, d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In an October 13 meeting with the Ambassador, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki expressed satisfaction that successful visits to China and the ROK had got Prime Minister Abe's administration off to a good start. Japan will play a role in implementing UN sanctions against the DPRK, Shiozaki said, and will consult with the U.S. on modalities. He welcomed President Bush's recent remarks highlighting the plight of Japanese victims of abduction by North Korea, adding that he has been appointed as minister-in-charge of the abduction issue. END SUMMARY.

Abe visits to China, ROK

12. (C) Successful visits to China and the ROK had enabled Prime Minister Abe to begin his administration with "a string of achievements," Shiozaki told the Ambassador on October 13.

Prime Minister Abe's visit to China was a "big step forward," he said, leading to the first Sino-Japanese joint statement in eight years. Relations with the Republic of Korea (ROK) received a boost from the North Korean nuclear test, he noted. Difficult issues remained on the agenda with both countries, but Abe was determined to work on them, he said. It was testimony to the strength and maturity of the U.S.-Japan relationship, noted the Ambassador, that Abe's first overseas trip was to China.

DPRK: UN sanctions, abduction victims

13. (C) Japan will take part in the implementation of sanctions against the DPRK under UNSCR 1718, mindful of domestic legal constraints, said Shiozaki. MOFA and JDA will work closely with the U.S. to coordinate a response, he said, in particular on Japan's role in any ship inspections. The government would need to explain its response in a way that would be easily understood by the general public, and carefully manage challenges from the opposition party. The Ambassador replied that the U.S. is confident that Japan would make a meaningful contribution to implementing the UN sanctions.

14. (C) Japanese public opinion backs sanctions, said Shiozaki, noting that North Korea's actions are seen as a real threat to Japan's security. He noted that the government had pledged to help soften the blow on businesses

hurt by the sanctions, and was stressing in public comment that the UNSCR measures were essential for Japan's "national security."

15. (C) Prime Minister Abe greatly appreciates recent public comments by President Bush highlighting the plight of Japanese victims of North Korean abduction, including schoolgirl Megumi Yokota, whose mother the President had met with in the White House, said Shiozaki. As Japan's first Minister in Charge of the North Korean Abduction Issue, he noted he had just launched a new "headquarters" based in the Prime Minister's Office to give stronger cohesion to the government's efforts in this area.

Afghan ring road

16. (C) On the Afghan ring road problem, Shiozaki said that, after discussing the issue in a recent telecon with NSA Hadley, he had asked MOFA to look into how to reinvigorate Japanese support for the road's completion. The Japanese embassy in Kabul would work with the U.S. embassy there to get the project restarted, he said. The Ambassador emphasized the importance of completing the Japanese-funded portion of the road project in order to enable Afghan farmers to affordably grow crops other than opium.

Okinawa governor's race

17. (C) The outcome of the Okinawa governor's race in November could impact the implementation of realignments of U.S. forces outlined in the October 2005 "2 2" agreement, said Shiozaki. The race is looking "tough" for the ruling Liberal

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Democratic Party (LDP) candidate, he said. Even if the opposition candidate wins, however, the Japanese government remains committed to implementing the agreement, he emphasized.

18. (C) Shiozaki agreed that the relationship between the Chief Cabinet Secretary and the U.S. Ambassador was vital; it had proven particularly valuable in coordinating a bilateral response during recent provocations by North Korea. That channel would continue to be useful, he said, especially in trying to tackle issues that involved more than one Japanese government agency. Both agreed to try and meet regularly, continuing the practice of their predecessors.

19. (U) Biographic note: Shiozaki said his son, currently working as an aide in his father's office while waiting to attend law school in the U.S., once took Secretary Rice's course at Stanford University.

SCHIEFFER